(c) The F.C.I. has taken a number of steps for reducing storage and transit losses such as enforcing 100 per cent weighment at all points of handling of foodgrains to the extent possible, additional installation of weigh-bridges, stricter quality control at the time of purchase, better preservation, reduction in quantum of filling, machine stitching of bags, effective supervision and surprise checks, etc.

Decline in offtake of Foodgrains by the Public Distribution System

532. SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:

SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the offtake of foodgrains by the Public Distribution System has gone down in recent months;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Food Corporation of India has failed to sell the foodgrains in the open market; and

(c) if so, what remedial steps have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) No, Sir; the total offtake under public distribution system was 47.45 lakh tonnes during January—May 1986 as against 36.63 lakh tonnes during the corresponding period last year.

(b) and (c) The Food Corporation of India sold 15.83 lakh tonnes of wheat in the open market during 1985-86. The sale was discontinued with effect from 1-4-1986 and has since been resumed from 4-7-1986.

Prices of essential commodities

533. SHRI ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE:

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the retail and whole-sale prices of essential commodities during the last 12 months, month-wise.

(b) how do these prices compare with those that prevailed during the corresponding period in the preceding year; and

(c) if there has been a price rise, what has been its impact on the persons who are below the poverty line as also on those who are in the fixed income groups?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b) The available information is given in Statements at Annex. I & II (See Appendix CXXXIX, Annexure Nos. 29 and 30].

(c) There has been some increase in the prices of several essential commodities during the last 12 months. This would have some impact on persons below the poverty line and those in the fixed income groups. However, various measures have been taken by the Government to minimise the impact of price rise. These include strengthening and expanding the Public Distribution System through which some important essential commodities are distributed at reasonable prices to the common people. Foodgrains at cheaper prices are distributed to poor people in the rural areas under various special schemes. The cooperative network sells a number of essential commodities at reasonable prices. The price rise in the case of large section of people belong-